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General Assembly

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Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 2

Resolution adopted by the Human Rights Council on 23 March 2016

31/1. Composition of staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Human Rights Council,

Recalling paragraph 5 (*g*) of General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, in which the Assembly decided that the Human Rights Council should assume the role and responsibilities of the Commission on Human Rights relating to the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, as decided by the Assembly in its resolution 48/141 of 20 December 1993,

Taking note of all relevant resolutions on this issue adopted by the General Assembly, the Commission on Human Rights and the Human Rights Council,

Bearing in mind that an imbalance in the composition of the staff could diminish the effectiveness of the work of the Office of the High Commissioner if it is perceived to be culturally biased and unrepresentative of the United Nations as a whole,

Reaffirming the importance of continuing ongoing efforts to address the imbalance regarding the regional representation of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner, most notably in senior management positions,

Noting with concern that the dependence of the Office of the High Commissioner on extrabudgetary resources is at the heart of the imbalance in the composition of its staff,

Underlining that the paramount consideration for employing staff at every level is the need for the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, taking into account Article 101, paragraph 3 of the Charter of the United Nations, and expressing its conviction that this objective is compatible with the principle of equitable geographical distribution,

Recognizing that the Fifth Committee is the appropriate Main Committee of the General Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters,

1. *Expresses serious concern* at the fact that the imbalance in the geographical representation in the composition of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights continues to be prominent, particularly at the senior management level;

2. *Requests* the High Commissioner, within his administrative responsibilities, to redouble his efforts with a view to redress the current imbalance in the geographical composition of the staff of the Office, despite the budgetary contingency, and to establish specific and public targets and deadlines to be achieved;

3. *Also requests* the High Commissioner to work on attaining the broadest geographical diversity of his staff by strengthening the measures aimed at achieving better representation of countries and regions that are unrepresented or underrepresented, particularly from the developing world, while considering applying a cap on the representation of countries and regions already overrepresented in the Office of the High Commissioner;

4. *Further requests* the High Commissioner to implement and promote further measures to eliminate the current imbalance in the geographical composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner, taking particular measures to tackle the imbalance in the number of posts not subject to geographical distribution;

5. *Welcomes* the efforts made towards the achievement of a gender balance in the composition of the staff, and the decision to continue to pay special attention to this issue;

6. *Underlines* the importance of continuing to promote geographical diversity in recruitment and promotion in the Professional category and, in particular, in senior management positions as a principle of the staffing policies of the Office of the High Commissioner;

7. *Recognizes* that efforts to achieve savings and the efficient utilization of resources should not adversely affect the full implementation of mandated programmes and activities and the measures taken for improving the geographical composition of the staff;

8. *Reaffirms* the vital importance of geographical balance in the composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner, taking into account the significance of national and regional specificities and various historic, cultural and religious backgrounds and of different political, economic and legal systems to the promotion and protection of the universality of human rights;

9. *Recalls* the provisions contained in section IX, paragraph 2 of General Assembly resolution 63/250 of 24 December 2008, on human resources management, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure as wide a geographical distribution of staff as possible in all departments, offices and levels, including the Director level and higher levels, of the Secretariat;

10. *Underlines* the priority importance with which the General Assembly should continue to provide support and guidance to the High Commissioner in the ongoing process of improving the geographical balance in the composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner;

11. *Stresses* that extrabudgetary resources, in particular when they are related to the establishment of new posts, shall be used in a manner consistent with the mandates, programmes and activities of the Organization, including the principle of equitable geographical distribution of the staff, and in compliance with the existing budgetary rules and regulations;

12. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue to improve his interaction with Member States, including within the framework of President's statements PRST/15/2 of 1 October 2010, PRST/18/2 of 30 September 2011 and PRST/19/1 of 22 March 2012, and giving particular attention to the composition of the staff;

13. *Also requests* the High Commissioner to submit a comprehensive and updated report to the Human Rights Council at its thirty-sixth session, with a special focus on further measures taken to correct the imbalance in the geographical composition of the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner;

14. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

62nd meeting
23 March 2016

[Adopted by a recorded vote of 33 to 13, with 1 abstention. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Burundi, China, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Togo, United Arab Emirates, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam

Against:

Albania, Belgium, France, Georgia, Germany, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Abstaining:

Mexico]